

HAMILTON HALL

BY
MARIE E. FABENS



ALEXANDER HAMILTON

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HAMILTON HALL

ERECTED 1805

BY AN ASSOCIATION OF WEALTHY SALEM
GENTLEMEN AT THE COST OF \$22,000. OFTEN
CALLED ASSEMBLY HALL, AS IT WAS BUILT
TO PROVIDE A SUITABLE HALL FOR THE
SELECT SALEM ASSEMBLIES. NAMED FOR
ALEXANDER HAMILTON, AN ADMIRED
FRIEND OF MANY OF THE ASSOCIATION.

...*By*...

MARIE E. FABENS



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Salem, Mass.



HAMILTON HALL

THE TREE'S STORY

"Why is it, think you, that they have planted me in this lonely place? Nothing will happen here. I shall grow; other little trees will grow around me, and we shall be a stupid forest. Elm trees are meant to be where men and women are coming and going; where little children are playing; where the world is moving." Thus grumbled a sapling

Chestnut Street

Laid out in

1796

elm which had been transplanted from its garden home to a new section of the town.

The tree had been placed at a corner made by two intersecting roads—so called by courtesy, as they were hardly more than

paths. One or two houses were nearby, also a building used sometimes for a hall and sometimes for a church. Great piles of lumber which filled one of the corners, were, however, the

most prominent objects that the young tree could see.

Corner of

Chestnut and

Cambridge Sts.

"Perhaps when I grow taller I shall be able to see over these unsightly piles and gain a view of the ocean," continued

the tree. "Things will not be so stupid then. Here come some children. I hope they will not shake me, for I am not very steady yet."

The children stopped before a window in a little shanty near the lumber.

"I choose that," said the smallest.

"No, no, that kind is the best. Mother gave me the money and I shall buy the one that I like," said the largest of them all. He opened the door, which slammed behind him, a shrill bell ringing violently as it closed.

"A cent-shop," thought the tree. "At least I shall see some women and children."

The boy came out with his purchases and divided them among his friends. Candy seemed to act as a stimulant, for the children banged upon the window and door of the shop.

emitting war-whoops as they raced away, but, unfortunately, hesitating long enough to give the unstable tree a shake. A woman came to the door, shook her fist and stamped her foot, while the little tree shook from branch to root.

"If I could only tell her that they are hiding behind the lumber, she might do something," murmured the shaken tree. "They deserve a thorough punishment. I know every one of my roots has been loosened."

Men labored in the lumber-yard daily; the little shop was trundled from the corner to make room for the changes in the piles. The men used to say with a laugh, "There goes Miss Deland's house on wheels."

Much activity was now evident in the vicinity, and the tree felt that its fate was not such an unhappy one. A new edifice

South Church
Built 1804-5

was being built on the opposite corner—a church—to house the congregation now using the old hall. One man was especially active, the skillful architect and wood-carver, Samuel Mackintire. The spire grew higher and higher, until the little tree, grown to be quite a sizable elm, wondered if it would not soon reach the sky. The lumber was now cleared; bricks and sand were brought; a cellar was dug not far from the tree. This proved to be a different sort of structure, but Samuel Mackintire was the leading spirit here, as he was across the street.

The tree watched its growth with great interest. This was a hall to replace the old one,—demolished to make room for the new church. Many stately gentlemen

Hamilton Hall
Built 1805

were also interested, and came daily to watch the progress of the walls. Often they would lean against the tree, which was now strong enough to serve as a support, to discuss the merits of the plans and the expenses entailed.

"Whoever heard of a group of staid citizens, in a quiet community, paying twenty-two thousand dollars to provide their children with a hall for dancing? Our ancestors would turn in their graves should they hear of it," laughed one.

"When a pretty daughter asks for something, what can one

do?" said another. "All they can think of now is dancing and frolicking. The young men will find them poor help-meets, I fear."

"Do not worry," said a third. "When the time comes the gay maids make as expert housewives as the sober drudges, and are vastly more entertaining. I am glad to have a new hall for dancing where everything will be fresh and clean. Macintire's plans are good, and, as embellishments, his eagles and festoons cannot be surpassed."

"The Palladian windows are wide and will let in much light and air," said another.

"I am anxious to see the interior," said the first speaker, "for the balcony looks well in the plan, also the fireplaces. A great amount of wood will be necessary to heat the big hall."

"The four mirrors that I am expecting from Russia will be a great addition. A fitting companion the church will have in the hall. What will Parson Hopkins say to the gayety?"

The tree was tall enough to peep in at the wide windows and could watch the progress of the hall. Fluted pilasters supported a heavy cornice, which was surmounted by a groined ceiling. The mirrors were placed on the walls, and, to complete the picture, the fireplaces were filled with logs.

Hardly had the workmen finished, and the paint was barely dry, when ladies, young and old, were seen coming and going. They brought elegant rugs, sofas, chairs and hangings to decorate the severely plain interior of the hall. The dressing-rooms and the supper-room over them also received their share of attention. The gentlemen owners were most active, superintending the men who placed the furniture and fed the fires. As the tree watched the proceedings it quivered with excitement.

Perhaps the chief spirit was the caterer, John Remond, a young man from Curaçoa, who had been installed in an apartment on the ground floor of the building, with a great kitchen and cellar. The tree regretted not being able to see into the large kitchen with its huge brick ovens and fireplace, where fowls were turning on the spits, joints were baking in numer-

ous tin ovens on the hearth, while pies and cakes were being cooked in the brick ones which were built into the chimney.

**The
First Assembly
in this Hall
took place on
the Thursday
in Christmas
Week, 1805**

A band of negro fiddlers came and were placed in the balcony. At six o'clock the street was filled with carriages coming and going. The tree caught glimpses of matrons, in brocades, with headdresses of ostrich plumes; maidens dressed in delicate pinas and muslins; gentlemen wearing blue broad-cloth coats, knee breeches, silk stockings, and ruffled shirts. When the dancing began, the tree could well see through the brightly lighted windows the intricate figures of the contra dances, the bows and courtesies of the minuets. The hall pulsed with the rhythm of the dancers and the music, which made the branches of the tree wave in sympathy.

Underneath these branches a man paced up and down, waving his arms and muttering: "Back to back and breast to breast, dancing their souls down to hell." The tree recognized him as the parson of the church across the way.

The Assemblies came often, but the tree never tired of watching the dancers or of hearing the orchestra.

1809

One day a new type of music came up the street, which made the ground fairly tremble with its vigor. It was the Company of Salem Light Infantry, escorting His Excellency the Governor of Massachusetts, Christopher Gore. The Company halted at the foot of the tree, broke ranks and filed into the hall. The brilliant uniforms made a gay showing, with their blue coats and scarlet facings, white waistcoats and pantaloons, the gold crest in the caps adding to the splendor. These dazzling soldiers came frequently, and, at these times, the tree noticed that Remond would be unusually active. Vans arrived, having been driven over the road from Boston, loaded with exotic fruits and game; farmers came with produce; a live turtle would often be carried in to be made into the delicious soup

for which the caterer was noted; oysters, a new delicacy, were brought to tempt the palate.

1811

On the ground floor of the building were several rooms occupied by a grocery store.

Drays filled with hogsheads, bags, and barrels came for the proprietor, John Gray, Jun. The tree, now tall enough to see the harbor, realized that these loads always followed the arrival of a ship. Men congregated around the tree and long discussions would take place as to the latest prices on bags of sugar, hogsheads of rum or molasses.

One day the gay soldiers marched again to the hall; their heads held even higher than usual, the music sounding gayer. They were Commodore Bainbridge's usual, the music sounding gayer. They were Visit to Salem, escorting no less a personage than Commodore Bainbridge, the gallant commander of September, 1813 the frigate Constitution. For days there had

been a great commotion in the hall, and it had been wonderfully decorated with pillars and wreaths, arches and memorials. A grand dinner was served, brilliant speeches were made—the tree could not remember a more splendid banquet. The real climax came, however, when a curtain was pulled aside, disclosing a miniature frigate Constitution with twenty-four guns, from which a salute was fired in a very spirited manner.

Lafayette's

Second

Visit to Salem,

August, 1824

The greatest event of all came a few years later. The hall had never been so beautifully decorated; the ladies had never worked so hard to make it a bower of loveliness.

Loads of flowers and evergreens were brought; wreaths and garlands were woven and draped around the mirrors, chandelier, and balcony. A great American Eagle held a crown over the chair which the noted guest was expected to occupy. Among the inscriptions were these:—

“Welcome, welcome be the brave

To the homes he fought to save,”

and—

“Où peuti—on être mieux

Qu'au sein de sa famille.”

Notwithstanding a heavy rain, the street, as far as the tree could see, was crowded with people. When the soldiers and music came around the corner, from every throat burst forth the cry of "Vive Lafayette!"

* * * *

Many children came to dancing classes, for which there were numerous teachers. One, in particular, the tree noticed, who came for many years, a tall foreigner with a curly wig, named Papanti. He was never without his violin and often used his bow as a reminder to awkward boys and giggling girls that their deportment was not correct. Young people, also, came to attend the day-schools which were held in the lower rooms where the grocery store once flourished.

Changes came quickly now, and it became difficult to separate the rapid succession of events. Parties, fairs, plays, and concerts were held in the hall and supper-room; stores, schools, gift shops, music and dancing lessons in the rooms below. Remond lived and reigned for over fifty years in his apartments and brought up a family there. Other caterers followed, but none stayed for so long a period.

Like all people of a past generation the tree ponders on the new order. In the old days the parties, banquets, schools, and shops were managed and taught by men. All that is changed. Women (the word lady is no longer allowed) now direct the parties and often a man is not even allowed to peek into the hall. Women teach dancing and music; women run the shop; even the orchestra is often composed of women.

The tree thinks of the passing of the years and still wonders.

* * * *



Kindness of the Essex Institute

THE SOUTH CHURCH, SALEM
Destroyed by fire 1904

SOME OLD ADVERTISEMENTS

The subscribers to the New Assembly House are desired to meet this evening at Mr. Crombie's tavern precisely at 7 o'clock on business of importance to them. *Gazette*—Dec. 9, 1806.

New Assembly House.

All persons having demands against the subscribers to the New Assembly House, are requested to exhibit their accounts without delay to

STEPHEN PHILLIPS, or
PICKERING DODGE, Committee.

TO LET—2 Stores on the ground floor of the above mentioned building. —Oct. 2, 1807.

Dancing Academy at the Assembly Hall.

Mr. Nichols, of Boston, respectfully tenders to the Gentlemen of Salem his proposals for instructing in Minuets, Hornpipes, Fancy, Allemands, Cotillion, and Contra Dances. He proposes to commence on Thursday next at 7 o'clock.

Mr. N. has taught much in Boston, in the most modern style, and approved steps; credentials of which may be seen by applying at the Bookstore of Messrs. Cushing & Appleton, where persons wishing to become pupils are desired to call and subscribe. —Jan. 15, 1811

Dancing School at the Assembly Hall.

In consequence of several solicitations, Mr. Nichols proposes to commence a school to instruct Ladies in a new and fashionable style of dancing.—The first lesson will be given on Thursday, at 2 o'clock.

John Gray, jun., informs the public that he has opened a Grocery Store under the New Assembly Room in Chestnut Street, opposite the Rev. Dr. Hopkins' meeting-house, where he intends keeping an assortment of Groceries & Country produce.

Rum per hhd. molasses.

White & brown Sugars per box.

Muscovado Sugar per bbl. of cwt.

Coffee per bag.

Bone middlings & No. 1 Pork per bbl.

A few barrels of excellent cider. —April 28, 1811.

John Gray, jun.,

Has, for sale, at his store in Chestnut Street, opposite the meeting-house

60 boxes Havana white } Sugar of a superior quality.

40 do. do. brown }

A few hhds. excellent flavored & high proof Rum.

Good retailing Molasses, per hhd. Cotton, per the bale, at a very low price and good quality. Excellent London Porter. Few of the first quality Cheese, and a general assortment of groceries,

also

Amesbury Factory Nails by the cask. —July 12, 1811.

“South Buildings in Salem.”

The Proprietors of the South Buildings in Salem are hereby requested to meet at Hamilton Hall (so called) in said Salem, on Saturday the 25th inst. at 3 o'clock, P. M., for the purpose of making rules and by-laws for the management of said estate, of choosing officers of said Corporation for the year ensuing, of deciding on the number of shares into which the corporate property shall be divided, of determining the mode of calling future meetings of said Corporation, and of acting on any other business that shall be thought necessary.

WILLARD PEELE,

PICKERING DODGE.

—1820.

To Be Let.

The shops with the Cellars under them, in the South Buildings, Chestnut Street. Also several convenient Rooms for dancing in the upper part of the house. Apply to

GEORGE NICHOLS.

July 1, 1820.

Turtle Soup.

The subscriber will issue from his house on Chestnut St., this day from 12 to 1 o'clock, soup made from a superior fat Turtle, weighing over 200 wt.

His old customers and the public will be supplied as usual at 50 cts. per quart.

J. REMOND.

Nov. 15, 1820.

Hams, Cheese, Cider, &c.

John Remond has for sale

At his Store, South Buildings.

10,000 lbs., Virginia and North Carolina Hams, prepared expressly for shipping.

2,000 lbs., Shoulders, do. do.

4,000 lbs. Smoked Beef, (Albany Cured).

3,000 lbs. New Milk Cheese.

300 dozen Newark and Crab Apple Cider (wired and packed in Salt).

300 Glass Pots Pickled Oysters.

100 " " " Lobsters.

300 gallons Wine Vinegar. Suitable for American Market.

Also—constantly on hand Albany and Lansinburg Ale, &c.

N. B. Merchants and Masters of vessels supplied with Live stock as usual, at a reasonable notice.

—June 2, 1825.

PUBLIC DINNER
 given at
 HAMILTON HALL, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 3RD., 1829,
 to
 HON. JUDGE STORY.

Bill of Fare.

FIRST COURSE.

SECOND COURSE.

Turtle Soup.
 Boiled Hams.
 Do. Legs of Mutton.
 Do. Turkeys.
 Beef-a-la-Mode.
 Veal Fricandeau.
 Pigeons Paelis.
 Turtonge a-la-Braise.
 Halibut-a-la-mode.
 Baked Codfish.
 Chicken Pies.
 Oyster Do.
 Le Maccarone Do.

Roasted Pigs.
 Do. Bremen Geese.
 Do. Mongrel Geese.
 Do. Ducks.
 Do. Wood-ducks.
 Do. Beef.
 Do. Chickens.
 Do. Woodcocks.
 Do. Plovers.
 Roasted Pigeons.
 Do. Ring-necks.
 Do. Water-witches.
 Do. Quails.
 Do. Partridges.
 Baked Calveshead.
 Lobster Ragout.

PASTRY.

Lemon Puddings.
 Tapioca Do.
 Pies.

Plum Tarts.
 Apple Do.
 Custards.

PRESERVES.

DESSERT.

Plums. Greengages.
 Grapes. Peaches.

Water Melons. Musk Melons.
 Minorca Do. Nutmeg Do.
 Citron Do. Pineapple Do.

Caterer

JOHN REMOND.

'The Ladies' Fair will be held at Hamilton Hall, Chestnut Street, next Wednesday—should the weather prove unfavorable, the sale will be postponed to the first pleasant day. Doors to be opened precisely at ten o'clock, A. M., when the sale will commence and be continued through the afternoon and evening. At 12 o'clock A. M., some of the most valuable articles will be offered at Auction.—Price of Admission 12½ cents to be paid at the door. A poetical invitation to the Fair, written by Rev. Dr. Flint and catalogues of the articles to be sold, may be had at the different bookstores in town, and at Mrs. Harris' shop, Essex Street.

—Dec. 17, 1831.

Ladies Fair.

List of articles to be offered for sale comprises a variety to meet all tastes and exigencies. Our young bachelor brethren who are yet at a distance from their sixth lustre, will find infants' frocks, caps, robes, etc., to remind them of their duty, together with dickeys, stocks, and watch-guards, for their own use. The celibate of more than mature years, can obtain a nightcap that will not fail to procure pleasant dreams, and a "frightened bird" for an armorial device. Any young damsel who desires to know the stature, complexion, and profession of her future lord and master will have nothing to do but to consult a fate-flower or a fate-lady. The dandy will find butterflies; the dandizette, bird-cages; the housewife, thread cases, and everybody else, something useful or pretty or both.

Hamilton Hall.

Chestnut Street.

This establishment having been purchased by a new company, and undergone repairs, the interior of the same is so far completed that the subscriber is ready for the reception of Genteel Parties. The repairs and improvements already made; the

furnace which heats the entire Dancing portion of the building—entries, Supper Hall, etc.; the improved Chandelier; new sofas; Ladies drawing-room new carpeted and furnished in a comfortable manner; a reduction of former price of Hall; strict adherence to a uniform price of Help, and every care taken to select and furnish the most careful and obliging attendants with the enchanting music of the Salem Quadrille Band, cannot fail to secure the patronage of a generous public. Did I say above, “Entrancing Music”? Yes, without fear of contradiction, during thirty years and upwards that it has been my privilege to conduct the affairs of Hamilton Hall, I have never heard from five instruments richer music set forth than I did on the evening of the 27th November, ultimo.—There is one fact that should be known and which is acknowledged by all who have performed there, that five pieces of music are better in Hamilton Hall than seven in any other Hall in the city.

As respects the subscriber who is still to conduct the affairs of the establishment suffice it to say that those who have had the pleasure for a long series of years, to participate in such matters, are the best judges of the style, comfort, etc.

REMOND.

N. B. -With the extensive cooking apparatus and the other advantages of the premises. Families who do not wish to disarrange their houses,—or single gentlemen who are not at House-keeping—wishing to entertain their friends, can be accommodated at reasonable prices, and everything conducted in the family style.

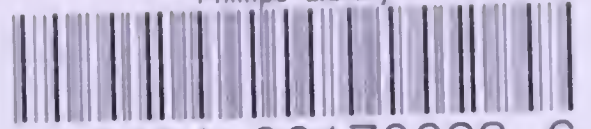
J. R.

Salem, Dec. 16. 1844.



OLD SALEM CORNER STUDIO

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